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**MARYLAND SENATE BUDGET AND TAXATION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN
ULYSSES CURRIE INDICTED ALONG WITH COMPANY EXECUTIVES
FOR TAKING BRIBES FROM SHOPPERS FOOD WAREHOUSE
IN RETURN FOR OFFICIAL ACTIONS**

***Charges Include Conspiracy, Bribery, Extortion, Mail Fraud and False Statements
Payments Grew from \$3,000 Per Month in 2003 to \$7,600 Per Month in 2007 But Were Never
Reported on Five Annual Government Ethics Forms***

Baltimore, Maryland - A federal grand jury has indicted Maryland State Senator Ulysses S. Currie, age 73, of Forestville, Maryland; and Shoppers Food Warehouse Corp. (SFW) executives, former President, William J. White, age 67, of Annapolis, Maryland and Jupiter, Florida; and the former Vice President for Real Estate Development, R. Kevin Small, age 55, of Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, in connection with a scheme from 2002 to 2008, in which the supermarket chain allegedly paid Senator Currie in exchange for using his official position and influence in matters benefitting White, Small and the supermarket chain. In addition, a separate criminal information was filed against Shoppers Food Warehouse Corp., which has agreed to enter into a deferred prosecution agreement. As part of that agreement, which must be approved by the court, SFW has agreed to pay a \$2.5 million penalty.

The indictment was announced by United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Rod J. Rosenstein and Special Agent in Charge Richard A. McFeely of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

“Government officials cross a bright line when they accept payments in return for using the authority of their office, whether they take cash in envelopes or checks labeled as consulting payments,” said U.S. Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein. “When businesses can obtain valuable government benefits by putting a senator on the payroll, it diminishes public confidence and disadvantages companies that refuse to go along with the pay-to-play approach.”

“Most government officials use their official power to pursue the public interest and not personal profit,” Rosenstein added.

“There has to be zero tolerance in our system of laws for an official who uses his elected office for personal gain. Our entire system of government is based on trust and confidence in our elected leaders; those that break this trust undermine this foundation and must be held

accountable,” said FBI Special Agent in Charge Richard A. McFeely.

The 18-count indictment alleges that soon after Ulysses Currie became chair of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee in 2002, he asked to be placed on the payroll of Shoppers Food Warehouse Corporation and agreed to use his government office and authority to pursue specific state action to benefit his private employer. Chairman Currie allegedly signed contracts reflecting the cover story that he would provide services unrelated to his government office; failed to file legally required conflict-of-interest statements with the Maryland General Assembly’s Joint Committee on Legislative Ethics; and lied under oath on public financial disclosure forms filed with the Maryland State Ethics Commission for five consecutive years, in 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008. Meanwhile, Chairman Currie caused to be introduced and voted on legislation to benefit the corporation and sought benefits on its behalf from state officials. The indictment alleges that Chairman Currie prepared a list of twelve specific projects in which he used his Senate office and influence to benefit the supermarket chain, and offered to bring “many more” government benefits in the future. Chairman Currie allegedly wrote that he was “in a unique position to assist” the supermarket chain “in expanding its mission and increasing its bottom line.”

The indictment alleges that Currie received payments of \$3,000 per month beginning in February 2003, raised to \$3,416.67 in July 2004, to \$3,800 in June 2007, and ultimately to \$7,600 per month in December 2007. In order to conceal his arrangement with White, Small and the corporation, the indictment charges that Chairman Currie did not disclose any income from the corporation on five separate annual ethics disclosures, from 2004 through 2008.

As part of his work for the company, the indictment alleges that Chairman Currie:

Contacted the Administrator of the State Highway Administration repeatedly in 2003 and 2004, including by a letter on official letterhead of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee, concerning the supermarket chain’s request for traffic signals at the site of a store on Route 140 in Baltimore County and at the site of a store on Route 198 in Laurel, Maryland;

Convened meetings in his Senate office, which White and Small attended, with the Secretary of the Maryland Department of Transportation on December 23, 2003, and with the Secretary of the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development on January 14, 2004, in an effort to secure \$2 million in public funds for a project at Mondawmin Mall in Baltimore, to reduce his employer’s costs in opening a supermarket;

Met with the Chairman of the Prince George’s County Liquor Board in 2004, along with Small, regarding the transfer of a liquor license from one of the supermarket chain’s stores to another, arranged for another senator to introduce legislation necessary to accomplish the transfer, then voted on legislation authorizing the transfer on April 8, 2005, and faxed a copy of the bill from his Senate office to Small on the day the Governor signed it into law;

Contacted the Maryland Energy Administration in December 2004 to seek a delay in the implementation of energy efficiency standards for chillers and commercial

refrigeration units under the Maryland Energy Efficiency Standards Act, at the request of Small, in order to reduce costs to the supermarket chain;

Convinced government officials in 2006 and 2007 to give up the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission's right to purchase land in Chillum owned by the WMATA, so that a portion of the property could be acquired, without competitive bidding, and used to expand one of his employer's existing supermarkets.

Convened meetings in his Senate office in 2006 and in 2007 with high-ranking state officials in an effort to obtain a grant of \$2 to \$3 million for the developer of Ritchie Station Marketplace for the cost of road improvements at the Ritchie-Marlboro interchange, so that the costs would not be passed on to the supermarket chain, which was a prospective tenant.

The indictment alleges that Chairman Currie signed written agreements falsely representing that Currie would assist "in minority recruitment and outreach, community relations and public affairs," and "to work with [corporate] executives to provide visibility and community leadership opportunities," when, in fact, the defendants had agreed that the company would pay Currie to take official acts and to use his official position and influence in ways that would benefit the business and financial interests of White, Small and the company.

The indictment further alleges that Currie, White and Small used e-mail and facsimile to carry out the bribery of Chairman Currie; that from 2002 to 2008, Chairman Currie, assisted by White and Small, extorted \$245,816.79 from the company to obtain his assistance in his official capacity and during the same time frame used the mail and email to deprive the citizens of Maryland and the State of Maryland of their right to the honest services of Chairman Currie. The indictment also alleges that White and Currie made false statements to FBI agents during the investigation. The indictment seeks forfeiture of \$245,816 allegedly paid to Chairman Currie during the scheme.

If convicted, Currie, White and Small face a maximum sentence of five years in prison for the conspiracy; a maximum of five years in prison for each count of bribery; a maximum of 20 years in prison for each of two counts of mail and six counts of wire fraud; and a maximum of 20 years in prison for extortion; Currie and White face a maximum sentence of five years in prison for making a false statement. No court appearance has been scheduled for the defendants.

An indictment or criminal information is not a finding of guilt. An individual or corporation charged by indictment or criminal information is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty at some later criminal proceedings.

United States Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein commended the FBI for its investigation in this case and thanked Assistant United States Attorneys Kathleen O. Gavin and Mark W. Crooks, who are prosecuting the case.